

 **Charging and Remissions Policy**

**Issue Date:** March 2025

**Reviewed by:** Full Governing Board

**Review Date:** March 2027

Roots Federation is a not for profit organisation that aims to have balanced budgets and no outstanding debts.

All schools within the Federation have funded places and fee paying day care and wrap around places (WRAP).

Fees are paid by:

* Those who have full day care places from 3 months old upwards and not in receipt of the supported or working families childcare code.
* Those who have additional wrap around care
* Childcare Vouchers issued through workplaces and Tax Free Childcare are accepted

Please note that full terms and conditions are given to parents upon commencement of places.

**Charging for School Activities Policy**

*(Based on the guidance provided in the ‘Governors’ Guide to the Law’)*

In general, no charge can be made for admitting pupils to maintained schools. Where education is provided wholly or mainly during school hours, it must be free.

**Voluntary Contributions**

The Headteacher or Governing Body may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

* Any activity which takes place during school hours

The contribution must be genuinely voluntary and the pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against.

Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no

way to make up the shortfall, then it will be cancelled.

**Families qualifying for remission or help with charges**

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which charges will be waived.

**Refunds**

Where an activity makes an unexpected surplus the school will consider making a refund. In accordance with the guidance set out within the HCC Financial Handbook for Schools’, Roots Federation will make a refund where the surplus is either:

* 5% or more of the total cost per person, or
* £5 or more per person

Surpluses will be reimbursed in ‘round amounts’ only, e.g. £3 not £3.29.

Where a refund is offered, the accompanying letter will indicate that ‘a surplus of £x has been made and that if the parent/guardian would like to take advantage of it, they should contact the office by a date two weeks in advance. If the school is not contacted by that date it will assume that the refund has been donated to school funds.’ All refunds will be made via BACS payment in order to maintain a clear audit trail.

**Debt Recovery Policy**

**General requirements**

Roots Federation will take all reasonable measures to vigorously collect debts as part of its management of public funds. A debt will be written off only after all reasonable measures (commensurate with the size and nature of the debt) have been taken to recover it.

Roots Federation will observe the relevant financial regulations and guidance set out in the Financial Handbook for Schools and any other legal requirements. In particular:

* The Executive headteacher will consider and write off bad debts in consultation with the CoG up to a value of £100
* the Governing Body will not write-off any debt belonging to the School or Day care which exceeds the figure of £500. Any sums above this will be referred to the Director of Children’s Services for approval and the formal agreement of the County Council’s Finance Director obtained before writing-off. (If any debtor has a number of debts which together exceed the write-off limit then these will be treated as a total amount).
* A formal record of any debts written off will be maintained and this will be retained for 7 years
	+ Roots Federation will initiate legal action to recover debts where this is deemed in the best interest of the school in consultation with legal representatives.
* School staff are expected to follow the following procedures to secure the collection of all debts**.**

**Initial reminders**

Initial reminders may be informal and made either in person (when a parent comes to collect/drop off the child) or by telephone. Normally, the day care manager or Office Manager will undertake this having built up a good relationship with the parents.

**First reminder letter**

A reminder should be issued by the Office Manager after informal reminder has been made. .

**Second reminder letter**

A reminder letter will be issued by the Day Care Manager/Head of School to prompt payment of outstanding fees.

In respect of Day Care, if advice and reasonable adjustments are not met then the Day Care place may be withdrawn.

**Third Reminder Letter**

A third reminder letter will be written by the Headteacher.

**Fourth Reminder Letter**

A fourth reminder letter will be issued by the CoG.

**Failure to respond to reminders/settle a debt**

If no response is received from the reminders issued, a letter will be sent to the debtor advising them that the matter will be referred to the Small Court for financial claim.

At the discretion of the Governing Body the debtor may be advised that they will be required to pay in advance for all future supplies or the supply will no longer be available to them. This decision and its basis will be recorded.

**Negotiation of repayment terms**

Debtors are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible

If a debtor asks for ‘repayment terms’ these may be negotiated at the discretion of the executive Headteacher A record of all such agreements will be kept and this will be shared with the debtor, clear terms will be included.

The Executive Headteacher will decide whether any debtor who has been granted extended settlement terms will not be offered any further ‘credit’ and will be required to pay in advance in future.

**Costs of debt recovery**

Where the school incurs material additional costs in recovering a debt then the Governing Body will decide whether to seek to recover such costs from the debtor. The debtor will be formally advised that they will be required to pay the additional costs incurred by the school in recovering the debt.

**Reporting of outstanding debt levels**

The Head of School will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is known / can be determined at any time and the Resources Committee will review the level of outstanding debts regularly to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective.